



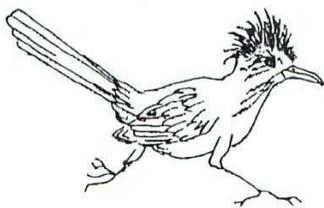
VIP2VIP



Season 2, Volume 3

Big Bend National Park's Volunteer Newsletter

February 10, 2003



Volunteers renew old friendships and form new ones at the January potluck dinner.



Please bring the recipe for your dish to the next potluck. Several requests were made for the recipes of the delicious dishes we enjoyed in January!



In the midst of the laughter, words of encouragement were heard as volunteers caught the ball and then struggled to name a Big Bend related item in the chosen category.



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
— "Mahatma" Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Persimmon Gap

Mark Kirtley- Visitor Center

Joan and Jack Lamkin- Visitor Center

Castolon

Carol Hines- Interpretation

Norma & Lloyd Burgi- Interpretation

Steve Harper- Camp Host, Backcountry, Archeology

Samantha Schroeder and Whit Hibbard- Camp Hosts and Backcountry

Rio Grande Village

Wayne Strelve & Jennifer Dyer- Visitor Center

Gail & John Kamaras- Visitor Center

Barbara & Richard Engle- Visitor Center

Barbara and Bill Baldwin- Camp Hosts

Linda and Steve Dettinger- Camp Hosts

Erv and Sam Drabek- Backcountry

Basin

Ginny and Jim Herrick- Visitor Center

Dana and Les Over- Camp Hosts

Kay and Richard Gordon- Camp Hosts

Suzanne Cable- Backcountry

SCA's

Maria Lavender- PJ Interpretation

Katrina Jensen- PJ Interpretation

Casey Parks- PJ Interpretation

Adessa Schwartz- Castolon Interpretation

River District

Steve McAllister- Backcountry

Carol and Bob Huber- Backcountry

Panther Junction

Becky Reiger- Volunteer Coordinator Assistant

Fran and Bernie Heyman- Interpretation

Bud Frankenberger- Resource Management

Camilla Rondina- Resource Management

Bob & Scarlett Wirt- Resource Management

Jessica Sherwood- Fire Management



Still learning about the local plants? Attend Wayne Strelve's walk up the RGV to Hot Springs trail and learn about some plants you may be unfamiliar with!



Carol & Bob Huber are helping transform maps and space to facilitate Search and Rescue.



Fran & Bernie Heymans' bird program is informative and a delight to attend!



Volunteer Corner

Suzanne Cable has found her Passion

Big Bend National Park is Suzanne's first real experience in the desert environment, but the position as a backcountry patrol ranger is not new to her. Suzanne is on furlough from her job as wilderness ranger in the Salmon-Challis National Forest, Northfork Ranger District, in Idaho.

A conversation with Suzanne will quickly lead us to realize that her "paid" job sounds a lot like what many enjoy doing when we play. The question comes to mind, "How does a nice New York girl grow up to become a wilderness ranger?" Growing up in Katonah, NY, didn't acquaint her with the outdoor lifestyle. However, her family's one week vacation each year in a cabin in the Adirondacks did instill a love for nature.

Suzanne decided on Brown University for her college degree, because she was a soccer player and they offered a degree in environmental studies. By graduation, she had accepted a job with an environmental consulting firm based in Connecticut. Having two months between graduation and the beginning of her job, she took her first trip out of the northeast with two friends. As they traveled cross-country, they visited National Parks in the US and Canada. On a hike in Cascades NP, Suzanne was paying more attention to the deer she was photographing, than the trail, and fell several hundred feet, tearing the ligaments in her ankle. She started her new job in waste management and recycling on crutches. Because she was very successful in her position, her company sent her to Brussels, Belgium, to develop numerous recycling plants throughout Europe. That year in Europe, traveling first class, staying in the best suites in the finest hotels, was wonderful, but highly stressful. It also helped her realize this was not a path she needed to continue. Suzanne quit her highly paid, prestigious job, loaded her backpack, and spent a year mountain climbing and backpacking in Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the South



Pacific, and Eastern Europe.

Once back in the US, Suzanne knew she had to make a decision about a job. Another road trip seemed the logical way to decide, and Suzanne ended up in White Fish, MT, outside Glacier NP. A friend that managed a trail ride

concession provided her first introduction to horses and mules. Within a few days, she was leading trail rides. After the season was over, Suzanne stopped in the Forest Service district office to inquire about positions. By luck a wilderness ranger had just quit, and Suzanne began her 1st job as a volunteer wilderness ranger.

By the next summer, Suzanne became a seasonal employee. She spent a few years as wilderness ranger in the summer and ski bum in the winter. During this time, she earned her masters degree at the University of Montana in Resource Conservation. Realizing she was becoming one of the oldest seasonals around, she accepted a permanent job with the Forest Service as a manager of wilderness areas in Alaska. This job was a valuable learning experience, but involved only desk work. Suzanne accepted a lower ranked job back in Idaho to get out in the field again. This job is the best of both worlds for her. She gets to be out in the field and has the ability to affect how things are managed. Unlike many people, Suzanne is not interested in climbing the career ladder.

Suzanne is fortunate that she has always been able to see her path. She has strong ideals and has exhibited a great deal of courage in pursuing her passion, even when family or society doesn't agree or understand. Her volunteer time here in Big Bend is allowing her to not only contribute to the park, but also to see some of the different ways parks manage their wilderness areas. This experience has also changed her opinion of Texas. She is happy to meet interesting individuals in a wonderful area she never knew existed!



In early January, 2003, Suzanne located Tim, a lost hiker.



Happy Birthday, Jennifer Dyer!

January 15 started early for Jennifer Dyer. She awoke at 6:00 am when her husband, Wayne Strevel, his head

covered with a pointy little party hat, pushed balloons into the bedroom as he followed singing and carrying a birthday cake topped with a flaming candle. Already off to a good start, her 50th birthday got even better when she entered the living room and saw the dog wearing a party hat too! Jennifer and Wayne's enthusiastic delight in life make them a joy to work with. Visitors and employees at Big Bend are fortunate to have them back for the 3rd year at the RGV Visitor Center.

Jennifer was born in Ontario, however she spent her childhood in eastern Tennessee. She graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee where she obtained a degree in Creative Design. After taking numerous art classes during her 4 years in school, she individualized the program, designing her own course and degree requirements. Because the materials she had used during college were expensive, Jennifer started using readily available honeysuckle to weave the baskets which made her nationally recognized. Her baskets, better described as sculptural designs, have been displayed and sold throughout the United States.



Jennifer met Wayne in 1978, while working in a health food store. He was an artist/craftsman working as a carpenter. Jennifer thought that might be a fun profession to learn, so Wayne agreed to take her on as an apprentice. After learning the trade, she started a business with her own crew. She didn't see Wayne again until New Years Eve 1990, when they ran into each other on Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Jennifer spent the intervening years doing many different jobs. She worked with wolves in Knoxville, ran a white water rafting tour, and worked as a step-on bus tour guide in the Great Smokey Mountains.

Wayne was on his way back from his first visit to Big Bend

when he saw Jennifer in New Orleans. They married after Wayne obtained his degree in forestry from the University of Tennessee. Loving this area, they started coming to Big Bend every January as visitors. They would stay as long as possible each visit. Eight years ago, they decided to leave Tennessee and move west. They got as far as western Montana before deciding that was about as good as it could get. However after spending 3 cloudy winters in Montana, they sold their house and bought a 5th wheel so they could spend the winters in a sunnier, warmer location. A friend described Jennifer's life as a lightning bolt, going from Tennessee to Montana to Texas. The first couple of winters they enjoyed traveling, but found they wanted to "do" something. Volunteering at Big Bend fit their needs.

Wayne recently became a permanent seasonal for the Forest Service, so they bought 5 1/2 acres in Montana, where they will use their building experience to build a small house. They still plan to come south during the winters. While in Montana, Jennifer works for the Swan Eco Systems Center in the Flathead National Forest. She was instrumental in developing this center. She also created and designed the exhibits there. One of her passions is designing forest exhibits that begin a dialog about what happens when a forest is altered. The goal is for this dialog to continue as people go out on the trail. She also works as an interpretive coordinator in the Lo Lo National Forest. The wonderful bat and javelina exhibits at the Rio Grande Village Visitor Center are examples of her work.

Jennifer believes that Big Bend is the best place to spend her birthday. Wayne continued the fun-filled day by taking her out to dinner at the Chisos Lodge. A little gray fox graced their view while they enjoyed her celebration dinner. This is what life is all about.



With sadness, I am preparing to leave Big Bend at the end of this month to continue my journey. I am humbled and deeply honored that I was given the opportunity to connect in an individual manner with each of you. My life has been enriched by my endeavors to compile this volunteer newsletter.

Big Bend is a very special and magical place to live, if even for a few short months. I have barely scratched the surface in

uncovering the many diverse and surprising views and experiences that are available here. After my first few days, I had already begun to understand why the visitors to this park return year after year. This is a place that speaks to my heart.

I sincerely wish for each of you a safe and enjoyable journey. I hope to see you again somewhere down the road!

